RESTORATION REVIEW

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. — *Mark* 10

The young man's frustration revealed his inner confusion of values . . .

See "What Makes Life Worth Living?"
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Volume 9, No. 8 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **October 1967**

A MATTER OF TRUTH

We are grateful to Johnny Ramsey for a recent piece in *Firm Foundation* in which he makes some provocative remarks about truth as related to unity. He quotes from J. W. McGarvey, who in 1885 in the *Old Paths Guide* gave a motto for unity: *Truth first, union afterward, and union only in the truth.* These words were later reproduced in both the *Firm Foundation* and *Gospel Advocate,* and brother Ramsey believes that they should be reechoed in these days of ecumenical concern.

Says our brother: "When brethren seem obsessed with *reaching* people instead of *teaching* them and *impressing* men instead of *saving* them, we stand in spiritual jeopardy. The Truth alone will make us free. Compromise, dialogue and the ecumenical atmosphere lend themselves to a watered-down, man-centered religion."

It is disturbing to see brother Ramsey associate compromise with dialogue, and to suggest that ecumenicity is inimical to truth. Would it not be better to call for dialogue without compromise and ecumenicity that respects truth? As his statement stands he is on record as opposing both dialogue and ecumenicity. This is about like objecting to human procreation because some births are illegitimate.

Does brother Ramsey intend to say that he objects to dialogue? The term is defined to mean "two or more persons conversing and reasoning." Are not the scriptures replete with admonitions that we talk over our differences and reason with each other in the presence of God? One of my favorites is Mal. 3:16: "Those who feared the Lord spoke with one another; the Lord heeded and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and thought on his name."

Is this not dialogue?

If it is the *wrong* kind of dialogue to which brother Ramsey objects, let him say so. And even more, let him propose the kind of unity effort that he would consider to be in harmony with the truth. He might seek help on this from the editor that published his article, for he too is often critical of our various unity efforts. If the current unity meetings

are not what they ought to be, then let brethren like Johnny Ramsey and Reuel Lemmons show us a better way. Let them conduct a forum that has the *right* "ecumenical atmosphere" and we will be glad to attend and see how it is done.

As for J. W. McGarvey's slogan that calls for "Truth first, union afterward, and union only in the truth," there is one big question to be asked-what is meant by *the Truth?*

Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6), and to Pilate the Lord said: "I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37). He also said: "You shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32).

If this is what brother McGarvey meant by his reference to the truth—the truth of the gospel—then of course we accept his premise that the truth must be the basis of unity. But if he meant, or if brother Ramsey means, by *the truth* our particular interpretations of what the scriptures teach, we hasten to demur.

Many of our brethren, and I fear Johnny Ramsey is one of them, insist on including their own opinions about missionary societies and instrumental music in *the truth,* and thus reject the brother who does not accept their opinion. They assume that one denies *the truth* when he refuses their interpretation.

We must learn that one may be *in Christ* and therefore "living according to the truth" (1 John 1:6) and still hold views different from our own, whether having to do with prophecy, the method of serving the Supper, or the way to support missionaries.

There is an important difference between *the Truth,* which is the fact of Christ, and the many truths that make up the scriptures. If we must be agreed on all the truths or facts of scripture before unity is realized, then unity will forever elude us. Some things in scripture simply are not clear to us, such as the identity of the anti-christ, the unpardonable sin, and the abomination of desolation. Indeed, there is hardly a paragraph of scripture in which there is not reasonable grounds for differences of opinion. Perhaps the Lord so intended, for this makes for study and the stretching of the mind. Surely it is a fatal fallacy to assume that we must reach unanimity on everything in the Bible.

Then how much of it must we be agreed upon to achieve the oneness for which our Lord prayed? I am tempted to say *none at all!,* but that would be misunderstood. But in an important sense that is correct, for the disciples of Christ and the primitive congregations enjoyed unity before *any* of the New Testament scriptures were written. What made them one? Jesus the Christ! This is *the Truth,* which existed *before* the scriptures. The scriptures exalt and clarify that truth, but are not to be equated with it. The scriptures reveal the context in which God gave *the Truth* to the world, and in doing so conveys many truths or facts, but the scriptures are not the same as *the Truth.* When our Lord prayed to the Father: "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17), He could nor of course have been referring to the New Covenant scriptures, for they had not yet been written. He was

referring to His own entrance into history for man's salvation, which was of course spoken of in the Old Covenant scriptures. Yet I am not implying that "thy word" in this instance would be restricted to the *Old Testament.*

To be more precise, therefore, I would say that for oneness in Christ to be possible we must together believe and respond to *the Truth* as revealed in scripture, which is to say that we must believe and obey the gospel. As for all the rest of scripture, there is good reason to suppose that in time, if we studied diligently together in a spirit of love, that we would reach substantial agreement on much of scripture. This is desirable, of course, but not necessary to unity. This points up a distinction we have long set forth in this journal: it is the gospel (kerugma) that is the basis of fellowship in Christ, not doctrine (didache) . This does not mean that doctrine is not important, for it is for our edification; it only means that it is not the basis of fellowship. Fellowship is centered in a Person, not in a Book. The Book may reveal the Person, but it is still the Person and not the Book that is the ground of fellowship. Just because the Book reveals the Person does not mean that fellowship is contingent upon people agreeing on everything in the Book.

It is indeed proper to love the Bible, but our exaltation of it sometimes borders on bibliolatry, which means *worship of a book.* In this same article brother Ramsey quotes a poem from George P. Morris (and I wonder if he accepts "the Truth" as brother Ramsey understands it), part of which reads:

The truest friend man ever knew,
Thy constancy I've tried;
When all were false, I found thee true,
My counselor and guide.

There may be poetic justification for this kind of devotion to a book, but when viewed critically one must say that this is what a disciple of Christ would be expected to say of his Lord. Speaking for myself, I don't worship the Book. I don't bow down to it or pray to it, nor do I call it "The truest friend man ever knew:' I reserve all this for the Master.

May God hasten the day when we will speak more responsibly in reference to the truth. So long as "accepting the truth" is made equivalent to joining the Church of Christ and "departing from the truth" is made equal to leaving the Church of Christ we will only reveal our superficial understanding of the nature of truth. We would be surprised to learn that the very passage we have so long applied to others may even more appropriately be directed to ourselves:

You shall know the truth, and the truth shalt make you free.

Truth is like a torch; the more you shake it, the brighter it burns.

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POWER POLITICS IN NASHVILLE

By Norman L. Parks

Is power—as St. Augustine and Jesus Christ both insisted—antithetical to religion? Or is religion, like politics, one of the manifestations of power?

Is it possible to carry on any group religious activity apart from a power structure? Can effective interpersonal relationships exist on a religious foundation devoid of power referrents?

The testimony of the religious world from the first Pope to and including the present Church of Christ is that Christ was wrong, and that the same kind of power which is "the essence of politics" is also the essence of religion.

As a student and professor of political science, the author has deeply believed that religion should be different in its essence and its manifestations from the world of politics. He does not find this to be the case as religion is presented in the day-to-day record of the Church of Christ. Indeed, it seems that this religious group is even more addicted to the instruments of power than the democratic state. The latter holds its ordinary citizen in higher respect and is more concerned with activating and responding to the will of the majority.

Recently there was acted out in the Federal district court in Nashville a tableau of Church of Christ power in all of its raw starkness and vividly described by the local press in the words of its actors. The participants in this religion race drama were the leading defendants, the officials of David Lipscomb College, and the plaintiffs, the Negro alumni of Nashville Christian Institute. The implications unfolded by this drama are of such profound significance that to ignore them may well prove disastrous for that religious group which denominates itself "Church of Christ."

The suit developed from the decision of the Lipscomb-dominated Board of Trustees to close the Nashville negro institution and transfer its assets, including $500,000 in endowment, to David Lipscomb College, where the fund would be administered by an all-white board. The extent of that domination was revealed in the queries put to Mack Craig, Lipscomb dean and NCI board member:

Q. Who is president of the board?

A. Pullias (A. C. Pullias, president of David Lipscomb College).

Q. Who is secretary of the board?

A. Pullias.

Q. Who is treasurer of the board?

A. Pullias.

One of the minority Negro members of the NCI board was asked if in his ten years as a member he had ever disagreed with Pullias on any question. He replied that no such situation had ever arisen. The implication of the question and answer was, of course, that one does not disagree with that kind of boiled-down, concentrated power and stay healthy.

The Nashville Christian Institute grew out of the burning need of Negro members of the Church of Christ for better prepared and more numerous preachers. The author attended several of their rallies more than 30 years ago to discuss the starting of a school. Certainly if ever a people gave out of their want, these poor people did—dimes and quarters from washer-women, janitors, and tenant farmers. He rejected an invitation to serve on their board and warned them against surrendering control of their enterprise to the white race. They have had to learn the hard way that, in a power-oriented environment, control goes with help.

NCI established itself in an old school building acquired from the city. Like Nashville Bible School in its origin, its educational program was not heavily structured and it was adult-education oriented. High school-educated preachers fitted the need and culture of Church of Christ Negroes. As one of the NCI alumni testified in the trial, “If I were to preach to a white Church of Christ like I preach to my people, the white church would throw me out. If one of their preachers was to preach to my church, everybody would go to sleep.”

That the massive revolution that is shaking the Negro world has not left the colored Church of Christ untouched was revealed in the testimony of alumnus after alumnus. Pullias was characterized as a racist by one alumnus, who told that when he and another NCI student were working as janitors at a church where Pullias was minister, he heard him refer to the two as “two Nigger students from Keeble’s (Marshall Keeble, Negro evangelist) school.”

White Church of Christ leadership was charged with viewing race relations within the “master-servant” context. Lipscomb College was described as practicing “token integration” to obtain federal funds, and its campus environment was such that very few Negroes would elect to attend the college, assuming they could be admitted, if it was possible to go elsewhere.

Testimony brought out that Lipscomb High School was all-white, and that boarding Negroes who had attended NCI could not be admitted since high school students had to live with their parents to attend Lipscomb. Starkly evident was the fact that the remaining

NCI students would be barred by the higher tuition rates and the lack of assistance and work programs which had made NCI attendance possible. Moreover, by board decision the NCI endowment would not be used to assist Negro high school students.

Why was NCI closed? Ostensibly because of declining enrollment and its unaccredited status. It is not possible to compete with public schools, Craig testified, though for a number of years he served as principal of Lipscomb High School, which has a flourishing enrollment and draws heavily from a vigorous elementary school program also maintained by Lipscomb. Testimony also revealed that NCI was inspected by the State Department of Education in 1963 and an invitation was extended to apply for accreditation. This invitation was not followed up by the NCI board, either in 1963 or later. Nor, apparently, was any effort made to exploit the opportunities opened up by the Economic Opportunity program.

Without question, Lipscomb has led every private college in the state in exploiting available federal grants and loans, whether for dormitories, science buildings, library resources, laboratory equipment, or teaching devices—a sum which now probably approaches $5,000,000. It is remarkable that none of this zeal was extended to NCI, which is located in a Negro ghetto and which in its own limited way has been trying to do something about kindergartens for the underprivileged, dropouts, and adult education.

NCI could well have been a major demonstration in modern race relations in the crisis of the Negro ghetto: “to preach good tidings to the poor, to proclaim release for captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are oppressed, to proclaim the Lord’s year of favor.”

If it is no violation of religious scruple to tap the federal treasury for a half million to fancy up a middle-class “church-related” college, where everybody takes baths and where tuition is high enough to make students of yesteryears dizzy, then what scruple stands in the way of seeking Economic Opportunity funds for the backward and unwashed?

The NCI alumni had a hard lesson to learn. Mere ghetto needs cannot stand in the way of beefing up a “clean” white college endowment by another half million. (Speaking of half millions and power plays, it might be mentioned that an effort was also made to absorb the $500,000 Fanning Orphan School Fund. While it did not succeed, it did not fail either, for the fund has lost most of its public character and its proceeds are used for scholarships at David Lipscomb College.) The Negroe's poor little lamb enriches the white man’s board. And it is all legal!

Whatever the alumni’s moral claim (it was a suit charging violation of their civil rights), they lacked the claims of power (in this instance law)—It has been enacted over and over again in law suits over instrumental music, premillennialism, institutionalism, anti-organizations, creed-in-the deed, test oaths for teachers, songbooks, Sunday School literature, and a multitude of other power-rooted phenomena.

The Negroes have lost their school, partly from calculated neglect, it would appear. NCI's empty windows will look out over a bleak ghetto landscape this fall. Their $500,000 will lift a little higher the educational towers of Lipscomb's lush acres, where will wander 2,700 white youths and 15 part-time and full-time "token integration" students and their kindred who will cook the meals and sweep the halls of their "betters."

Yes, they have lost their school, but found their independence. The trial said so in no uncertain terms that the day of patronizing is over. And having been spoken to in terms of power, they may well speak back in the years ahead in the same language.—*Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tenn.*

(Prof. Parks was dean as David Lipscomb College for eight years. He also taught at Freed-Hardeman and Oklahoma Christian, both Church of Christ related, as is David Lipscomb. He was eleven years at Peabody and Vanderbilt before going to his present position.)

Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely—LORD ACTON

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Things That Matter Most. . . No. 8

WHAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING?

"See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil" (Dt. 30:15).

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

The year 586 B.C. was dark and dismal for Israel. Ten years before the Babylonian kingdom has attacked Jerusalem and taken Israel's king captive, along with a number of people. It was the beginning of the end. Other deportations to Babylon followed. The city itself was about to be destroyed.

Jeremiah prophesied during these critical years, and the year 586 found him in prison, rejected by his own people. Famine and pestilence plagued Jerusalem and the Babylonian army was battering its walls. Catastrophe was at the very door. It was midnight for the people of God.

If we could have asked Jeremiah in that disconsolate hour, *Is life really worth living?*, he would surely have replied with a resounding *Yes.* And along with it, he would have told us, as he does in his prophecies, *why* life is worth living. Indeed, it was during Israel's darkest hours, those days just before the destruction of the city, that Jeremiah writes of

hope and comfort. In earlier years his judgments against the people were relentless and devastating. He condemned their sins and exposed their wickedness as no other prophet ever had, and he made it clear to them that their calamities were due to their rebellion against God.

And yet when the hour of despair had come and the moment of truth was upon them it was Jeremiah who spoke of God's love even for a wayward people and of ultimate victory for His chosen race. In a time of calamity the prophet insisted that the nation would not perish. Furthermore, Israel would someday be God's source of blessing to many nations, for from her will come the Messiah.

Jeremiah could see what Moses had long before observed, that God places before man "life and good, death and evil." It is man's role in the drama of life against death and good against evil that makes life worth living. The prophet's vision could penetrate the cloud of despair and see the silver lining of hope; amidst defeat he could *see* God's purposes unfolding toward ultimate victory. Even though he was a laughing stock to the people and "a reproach and derision all day long," he could still speak of the coming Messiah as "the Lord our Righteousness" and of a New Covenant to be written upon the human heart rather than upon cold tablets of stone.

Life taught Jeremiah that "to build and to plant," which was his commission from God, he also had "to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow." This is the very nature of life, and this is what makes life worth living. Building and planting would have no meaning apart from destroying and overthrowing.

It was in such a context that our Lord spoke of the abundant life. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy," He pointed out, contracting His mission with that of the hirelings. "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." He who lives the abundant life is one who overcomes evil with good. God is at work in him, blessing the world through him. He who is the Author of the abundant life is the One who laid down His life for the sheep. We live abundantly when we allow Him to live within us, using us to the glory of God. But this necessarily brings us into conflict with the evils of the world. Life and death, good and evil are always placed before men. The joys and triumphs of life come as we join battle with the evil forces for God's sake. Such is the abundant life.

Life is significant only when it is a fight. It is in the heroic struggle with the forces of evil that our existence really has meaning. It may be a struggle for one's own individuality or personal integrity in a culture that makes either very difficult. It may be a fight to save one's children from the many hazards they have to face so that they can be instruments in building a better tomorrow. It may be the ordeal of getting an education in the face of poverty or grappling with a health problem, trying to stay well in a world that needs all your energies. It may be the problem of living with and loving difficult people, or trying to

unite what has long been divided. It may be the conduct of a war or the struggle for social justice. Or it may be all these things and more. But surely life would have no substance without the drama of good and evil. Life is simply not worth living when one withdraws from the struggle or refuses to enter into it, choosing to be part of the problem rather than part of the answer.

The Quakers speak of *the simple life.* The Stoics insisted upon *the disciplined life.* Socrates taught *the examined life.* Theodore Roosevelt pled for *the strenuous life.* All of these may well be ingredients of what Jesus called "the abundant life," for all these were true of His own life. To live simply is to live without pretense and sham. It means to be one's true self, to live with singleness of purpose, to be pure of heart.

To be disciplined means to let the mind rule the body. It implies self-denial in behalf of noble causes. The examined life is a life of continual self-scrutiny that tends to be more judgmental of self than of others. It is the honest life. The strenuous life is one of urgency, one that accepts the issues of life seriously and gives one's self to them. Like Paul it is a life that is willing "to spend and be spent for your souls."

But the word that says most in describing what makes life worth living is *precipitousness*, a term we borrow from William James, the renowned Harvard psychologist, who used it in dealing with the very question we are asking: *What makes life worth living?* Prof. James came up with *precipitousness* as a result of a vacation he spent at the famous resort, Lake Chautauqua. Once at this resort James found himself surrounded with all that men hold dear—success, industry, culture, orderliness, peace, prosperity, cheerfulness. He was entertained by picnics, magnificent music, lectures by distinguished men, the best of company. There was no poverty, no diseases, no drunkenness, no crime, no police, no problems. He enjoyed the best fruits of what mankind has fought and bled and striven for under the name of civilization for centuries.

He tells how he was held spell-bound by the charm and ease of everything at Chautauqua, a veritable middle-class paradise. After a week of this he came back into the real world, and he surprised himself by thinking: "Ouf. What a relief! Now for something primordial and savage to set the balance straight again."

And then Prof. James said of his experience: "I soon recognized the element that gives to the wicked outer world all its moral style, expressiveness and picturesqueness—the element of precipitousness."

The professor has pointed to a vital principle of life. Life is made romantic and dramatic by the everlasting battle of the powers of light with those of darkness. Resort life as one might experience at Chautauqua may be all right for a vacation but an "ice cream and soda water existence" for the whole of life would be unbearable. The major issue of life is the conflict between good and evil, and life is worth the while to the degree one

involves himself in that struggle. The Christian must be too sensitive to ignore evil and too moral to tolerate it.

The Christian's Mission is conquest. In his own life he conquers sin and carnality by the Spirit that dwells within. He conquers self-will and self-conceit. In the world as a physician, teacher, and farmer he conquers disease, ignorance, and want—all for the sake of God and human dignity. *Conquest* is God's work through His children. So Paul says in Rom. 8:37: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

Nowhere is this so beautifully described as in *Revelation,* which is a book of conflict, depicting war in heaven as well as on earth. It is noteworthy that in all seven of the letters dictated to congregations in Asia in the first three chapters there is a glorious promise given to *the conqueror.* "To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God," He says to the church at Ephesus.

"He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death;' is a promise made to those in Smyrna. To the church at Pergamum He writes: "To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it." The one who conquers is further promised power to rule over the nations, white garments, and a place in the temple of God, and even a place beside the Christ on His throne. How glorious! But such promises are for those *in conflict* with sin and the world, with ignorance and disease, with injustice and oppression.

It is difficult for us to realize that we are at war. We must be in order to be conquerors. We must wage peace in a Christian world that has learned to love division. We must struggle for purity, goodness, and righteousness for a brotherhood that has lost its uniqueness and become like the world about it.

Our Lord "went forth conquering and to conquer." That is our mission, and that is what makes life worth living. We will surely lose some battles in the conflict, but with the Christ as our Captain we will ultimately win the war.—*the Editor*

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Review of "Voices of Concern" . . . No. 8

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

JAMES D. BALES

The "unity in diversity" of *Voices* embraces Dr. Thomas P. Hardeman who still has an "aversion to traditional theism" (pp. 5, 93, 99). As he immersed himself in political science, literature and philosophy, his desire to save people diminished, until now philosophy, not Christ, is his master. The wisdom of the world, which believes that man

does not need divine revelation, has crowded out Christ and His word (Lk. 8:7, 14; I Cor. 1:18. 2:16).

Hardeman maintains that "philosophy yields up its secrets only to men with time and will to contemplate." (p. 91) First, what secrets has philosophy revealed to him? Second, what reasons does he have for believing that these secrets are true? What are his criteria? Third, what motivation does philosophy give one to live by these truths? Fourth, what truth is there in philosophy which is not in the Bible?

The World's Self-Defeating Wisdom

Several attempts to contact Dr. Hardeman by mail failed; perhaps my letters never reached him. Thus, I have no express statement from him as to his exact philosophical position, but his questioning of and aversion to the whole of traditional theism, his attitude toward the supernatural, and his statement about humanism, indicate that he is some sort of naturalist.

God has so constructed reality that when man denies God, he denies his own rationality and humanity. First, if matter in motion is the sale reality, it is absurd to glorify the mind since all man's thoughts are but motions of matter put in motion by Other non-rational motions of matter. To say "I think" is to describe a physical sensation just as when one says "I itch." In such a case, there is no reason to believe that these physical sensations, physically produced, can be insights into reality. Second, if naturalism is true, although one could not know that it is, why should man search for truth? Consistent naturalists deny the reality of truth; and even if there is truth, why is man obligated to search for it? Third, most naturalists say that we ought to be intellectually honest, but since consistent naturalism embraces moral relativity, what is meant by honesty; and whence the obligation to be honest? Fourth, some affirm that all is relative; therefore, we ought to be tolerant of one another? Why? What proof is there that tolerance is preferable to intolerance? Fifth, some say that even if there is no God to serve, we can serve humanity. (a) For the Christian, service to God involves service to humanity. (b) The humanitarian impulse of the naturalist is not derived from, nor sustained, by his naturalism. (c) Why are we obligated to serve humanity? (d) Who is this humanity? If man is but matter in motion, and merely a short-lived animal, why should anyone be mindful of man?

The Fatal Blow

As far as I can discern, from what is expressed in his chapter, Dr. Hardeman says his faith was slain by a point pressed by his opponent in a debate on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Literate and skilled, this professor led me into an examination of the very concept

of evidence for ‘supernatural’ events. My brethren wrote high praise of my efforts, but Sara and I questioned the basic presuppositions of my arguments.

“Having no definite criteria for determining the supernaturalness of historical events, how could I be so sure that a given event was supernatural? I wondered, and I wonder, despite the arguments of A. E. Taylor, C. S. Lewis, *et alia.”* (p. 89).

What shall we say to this? First, is this a sound argument, or is it just how Dr. Hardeman happened to vibrate as a result of motions made by another vibrating lump of matter—the professor. If it be said that Dr. Hardeman is not a materialist—and whether he is or not, I do not know—I reply: What definite criteria does he have for determining that materialism is not the truth about life? What definite criteria does he have to prove that there is any moral obligation and any moral law? What criteria does he have to prove that we ought to serve humanity? What proof does he have which shows humanity is of any value?

Second, if Dr. Hardeman states that he is not a materialist, what definite criteria is there for determining the reliability of his testimony? How would he prove that he is whatever he is?

Third, what proof does he have, what definite criteria, to establish the reality of any historical event?

Fourth, what is the definite criteria which Dr. Hardeman uses to prove the naturalness of any historical events; how can he be sure that a given event was natural? After he has stated his criteria, someone can always state that he was not there, so how does he know that a supernatural force was not at work? And even if he witnessed the event itself, how does he know that its cause was not supernatural. Although I do not know just what Dr. Hardeman will say, I assume that he would ultimately conclude that he proves the naturalness of the event by showing that it can be explained in terms of present day processes, which we call natural.

If, on the other hand, an event clearly cannot be explained in terms of present day ,natural processes, we are justified in concluding that the explanation is not natural, but supernatural. One would be justified in accepting such an explanation, especially when the event is not only inexplicable in terms of natural forces; but is also in opposition to what we know about natural forces. The universe, Christ, and the Bible, cannot be adequately explained in terms of present day, natural processes. Men who die, and are buried as was Jesus, do not come forth from the tomb. Natural processes result in the disintegration, not the resurrection, of the body. Christ was not held by the power of death; therefore, something above and beyond the natural was at work. His resurrection is not explicable in terms of the natural.

It may be replied that it would take supernatural testimony to establish the reality of a supernatural event. This is not so. What the apostles testified to was not some theory of the physical changes in the body of Christ. They did not have to explain how God could do it. What they testified to was as simple, basically, as my testifying that I saw a friend several days ago, and that I saw him again today. They testified that they had been with him and knew him; that he had been put to death and buried; and that a few days later they saw Him, walked with Him, talked with Him, ate with Him, and recognized the impact of that familiar and beloved personality. They had scientific evidence that He was alive. This was the evidence that came through the seeing of the eye, the hearing of the ear, the touch of the hand, and the impact of personality on personality.

In evaluating their testimony, there are three questions which we ask: First, were they in a position to know the truth concerning the matter about which they testified? Second, were they honest enough to tell the truth? Third, are the documents reliable? They meet these tests with flying colors; and the documents which enshrine their testimony meet the test that reliable documents must meet.

We shall take at least some of the very ways in which Dr. Hardeman seeks to discredit their testimony to the resurrection of Christ and discredit his own testimony when he says that he does not believe in Christ's resurrection. We shall take at least some of the ways in which he discredits the documents, and show that we have no grounds for believing that Dr. Hardeman wrote his chapter in *Voices of Concern.* However, we would not have to do these things in order to show that we have sufficient reasons to believe in the testimony of those who saw the resurrected Christ.

Whence the Humanism?

Dr. Hardeman spoke of humanism which was "flowing from sources deep within me . . . " (p. 88). He hopes that good people will get together and solve the pressing problems of man through the exercise of moral force, etc. (pp. 99-100). First, what does he mean by sources deep within him? Within the confines of his presuppositions, what can justify him in saying that there are sources deep within him or in anyone else? What criteria does he have to prove that such exist? So far as naturalism is concerned, all which flows within him are gastric juices, blood, and various other manifestations of living matter. Second, what is true humanism, and what criteria does he use to establish it in contrast with false humanism? In other words, as our first comment indicates, what is man? Communists maintain that Marxism-Leninism is true humanism. What criteria does Dr. Hardeman have to prove that they are wrong? If he cannot prove they are wrong, is there any objection which one ought to raise to their theory and practice of Communist humanism? Without God, man is just an animal and humanism is a form of animalism. Third, what does he mean by "good people" (p. 100), and what criteria does he use to

prove that they are good people? How does he know that Stalin was not a good man, and that Mao and his likes are not good people? How does he know Hitler was not a good man? What is his standard of good? Where did he get it? What criteria establishes it? Is it upheld by, or undermined by, his philosophy of naturalism? If he is not a naturalist, why does he repudiate the super-natural?

Fourth, Dr. Hardeman's humanitarian impulses came from his Biblical roots which he now severs in theory; although his humanitarianism is an effort to live by the sap of the tree of faith from which he has severed himself. It did not originate with his present world view, and it cannot be sustained by this world view. He speaks of their "obligation to society" (p.94), but whence this obligation? In the light of what criteria does he establish the obligation? What criteria can he use to establish the reality of a moral realm, moral law, and the reality of duty? He speaks of "doing the Lord's work" in helping people (pp. 95-96). If there is no Lord, so how can their work be the Lord's work? What is his criterion? He speaks of "experiencing a fulfillment of the old idealisms" (p. 96), but he does not show how he sustains it on the basis of his new faith. What is the criteria of his "idealisms"?

How does he prove it? He says that he does not have a felt need to do so, but that it will ultimately be proved. "I no longer feel the need to prove the rightness of these actions. Time, experience, and the judgment of God and men will do that." (p. 96). Why ask us for proof of the resurrection? Could we not just asserr thar we are right; and that time, experience, and the judgment of God and man will prove it? What criteria, if one is going to more than assert, does he have to prove that these things will be thus proved? If one has no criteria to prove this, what is wrong with asserting that the opposite of his idealism is true, and that it will ultimately be proved? Does he think his case will be proved by a supernatural judgment of God? How can he affirm this, since he has rejected the supernatural events. Does he reject them in so far as the past, as set forth in the Bible, is concerned, but accept them for the future? How would he know that it was a judgment of God, and how would be know it approved what he does?

In the light of Hardeman's naturalism—and some form of naturalism is evident from his aversion to traditional theism *and* his rejection of supernatural events in the past (p. 89) —how can he say that time will prove him right? If death ends all, time proves that the ultimate outcome is not changed regardless of whether one lived like Jesus and died an early death, or lived like Stalin and died in one's old age after having killed millions. How can experience prove his position? Whose experience? Ecclesiastes shows that, viewed naturally, all is vanity; regardless of whether one seeks for meaning in wisdom, in mighty works, or in pleasure. It all comes to the same thing-death. How can the judgment of God prove Hardeman's case? After repudiating God's revelation in Christ, does Hardeman think that he will have some revelation from God which shows that a particular judgment

is a judgment of God approving Hardeman's work? On what philosophy has he fed that he should have an aversion to traditional theism, that he should reject the supernatural manifestations of God in history, and yet appeal to some future judgment of God as justifying the course Dr. Hardeman has taken? Besides, what evidences does he have for a supernatural Being, if he still holds to the professor's position concerning supernatural events? Will the judgment of men prove his course? If so, which men? Millions of men will repudiate his course, so who is to say that the future judgment of men will sustain his course.

Without the light of divine revelation, Dr. Hardeman can have no assurance that life is anything but the "murmur of gnats in the gleam of a million, million suns." If God has not spoken, who are we to care about the guttural sounds made by an animal known as man. Hardeman has laid the ax to the root of the tree, not only of Biblical supernaturalism, but also of morality and humanity. He may continue to live by the morality of a faith which he now denies, but those reared on his present faith will repudiate also the morality which ultimately is rooted in a supernatural world view.

Let me end on some agreements. First, I agree that it is possible for a young man to become proud because of his skill in debate and discussion. So can older men. Second, one ought not to look in contempt on others. Third, we should accept truth, regardless of who calls it to our attention.

May Dr. Hardeman come back to Him who is the way, the truth, and the life.—*Harding College, Searcy, Ark.*

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A Letter to James D. Bales . . .

ATHEIST, AGNOSTIC, OR WHAT?

By Pat Hardeman

Dear Jim,

Your one brief letter asked me to specify whether I am "atheist, agnostic or what." This letter replies partly to your request and partly to your review of my chapter in *Voices of Concern.*

First, as to your wish to have me neatly labeled, let me assure you I am neither atheist nor agnostic, so I guess my beliefs fall under "or what." More seriously, I know of no better words to describe my orientation than "Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief." I confess there is much about religion I do not know for certain.

This doubt extends to some criteria for determining the supernaturalness of historical events. I doubt the interpretation of certain passages in which I**,** and others, once discovered suspension of natural law only to discover later that there may have been a completely natural explanation. I doubt that even you, Jim, would contend that you have compiled a final list of all those events in the scriptures which clearly show simultaneous suspension of natural law and operation of the supernatural. Are you completely satisfied with your criteria for determining which events are supernatural? For example, is the effect of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit natural or supernatural?

Your review is disappointing to me in two respects. First, you choose not to deal with any of the four issues I discussed under the heading: "barriers to my remaining in the Church of Christ." My disappointment is nor expressed for a point in debate. It comes rather from my original expectation that, if you were to review the articles, a constructive dialogue might get under way, perhaps even eventually inside the Church of Christ. Many agonizing closed door sessions among preachers and students confess the issues exist, but virtually no open debates are held among brethren as equals and without recrimination or rancor. I hope someday the doors will be opened and the fresh air of open inquiry will come into the Church of Christ.

The second disappointment in your review is your reversion to your debates of yesteryear in your irrelevant disquisition on naturalism and materialism. Is transforming my doubts into an allegation of full blown naturalism, you are simply mistaken, and equally so in assuming that all naturalisms are reducible to a crass materialism. Enough of that. I am not a materialist, even if I do not have a final criteria for determining the materiality of every event or process in the deepest realm of the subatomic world. Do you?

You ask me to list truths I believe in that are not in the Bible. Well, there are various types of truth to list. Let's start with the principle that slavery is wrong. Are you positive this is in the Bible? Or another, the right of oppressed people (e.g. the American Colonies) to revolt against the higher powers (e.g. King George III) doing the oppressing. Is this in the Bible? There are passages that may contain the opposite of this truth. For example Rom. 13:1, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God." Was the American revolution a violation of this passage? Neither my patriotism nor my conception of human rights would allow me to say the Declaration of Independence was sinful.

Then there are historical truths such as that George Washington was our first President, and other factual truths, e.g., to do summary punching on IBM 514-402 machines, one must wire the SP-SW switches on the 402 control panel, even if through a co-selector. Then there is the philosophical truth that all mathematical systems are ultimately reducible to *if—then* propositions. I do not recall reading these in the Bible. Incidentally, I was happy to note your third concluding agreement that "we should accept truth regardless of

who calls it to our attention." Could *any* truth be called to your attention besides a heretofore overlooked passage of scripture?

In addition to your denying me the capacity to find truth outside the Bible, you limit the support of my moral life to my background in the Church of Christ. Did you tell the audience at Billy James Hargis' "Christian Crusade" meeting that, being non-members of the Church of Christ, they have denied their humanity, rationality, and morality, or were living on borrowed morality. I doubt it, but your logic says you should.

You affirm that any moral humanism must come only from the Bible. I remember reading "he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (John 4:20). Where in the Bible have you read that a man cannot love his fellow man unless he believes all the Bible and particularly your branch of the Church of Christ's interpretation of it?

Back to problematic issues in the Church of Christ. Jim, let me ask you some heartfelt questions, again not to make points but to make a plea for earnest and open dialogue inside the Church of Christ. How do you justify the leap from the simple historical reference (Acts 20:7). "On the first day of the week when the disciples were gathered together to break bread," to the doctrine that all Christians must do this every first day, but no other day? Surely you feel this is a problem.

Again, the continued claim that the body of Christ is practically congruent with the groups known as Churches of Christ is a serious barrier to the unity for which Christ prayed. Are you positive that your unwillingness to give open fellowship to other believers in other churches is what the Lord wants? Is it right to refer to such fellowship as being "unequally yoked together with unbelievers?" On what basis do you contend that some groups are not true Churches of Christ because they makes rules without scriptural precedent while simultaneously defending a group of churches which legislate against *all* drinking, gambling and dancing? Which class of human legislation disqualifies a religious body and prevents its being a true church?

Will you fellowship a person who disagrees with you concerning the taking of another human life in war, if he agrees with you on baptism? What are your criteria for extending fellowship? I used to answer that by saying we should fellowship those who "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7) till I realized that unless walking "in the light" is interpreted in a relative sense, we are all in darkness. Who determines who is "in the light"?

Are you positive that I cannot "sing and make melody in" my heart in acceptable worship to God while an organist plays the tune for the whole congregation? Even on your terms, am I not doing precisely what the scriptures teach (Col. 3:16, Eph. 5:19)? If I am, is not the repudiation of the Disciples of Christ by the Church of Christ an unchristian rejection of brethren? Are you certain that God looks with favor on your treating the Missionary Society as a cause for disfellowship while contending that colleges,

lectureships, bookstores, papers, etc. are simple expedients? Some of your brethren reject the Christian College and Sunday School notions. You plead for these brethren to see these aids as expedients and to be more charitable. Could not the Disciples plead the same on the subject of Missionary Societies and organs? You are sure God and the Bible are on your side in all the reasoning needed to distinguish these cases? Though I think I am acquainted with most of the arguments used on each of the subjects, I am far from sure they are justifiable causes for divisions among Christians.

As I have restudied the Scriptures I have been driven again and again to certain principles that have become basic to me.

(1) The Judea Christian religion is immensely humanistic. Jesus found it in the higher strains of the Old Testament and transmitted it to his followers. Concern for one's neighbor i.e. those in need, is the deepest expression of "pure and undefiled religion."

(2) There is, objectively, much more certainty attainable from the Bible on the subject of our obligations to our fellow men than on such subjects as forms of liturgy, church government and organizations. Differing forms of worship do not arise because one religious party chooses to ignore *the* Biblical truth on the subject. Instead, the Bible may present several aspects or viewpoints on a subject, not necessarily all harmonized into *one* doctrine.

The alternative to admitting that there is latitude—even to the extent of some unreconciled points of view—within the Bible itself poses seemingly insoluble problems. The assertion that Biblical teaching is *one* harmonious body of doctrine on each subject, and that we must accept that *one* body of doctrine, necessitates definite answers to many questions to which apparently no definite answers exist. For example, questions about baptism for the dead, speaking in tongues, qualifications of bishops, the mode of indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, the role of tradition in Christianity, and many others. (Jim, are you absolutely certain that you have harmonized all the points implicit in the generally accepted two-fold practice of (1) excluding human tradition when you debate with Roman Catholics, and (2) instantly relying on tradition—Church Fathers, archeological testimony, etc.—when you are defending the canonicity of the 27 books of the New Testament?)

If there is just *one* harmonious doctrine on each of these subjects, can you state each one as explicitly as you can on other subjects? Can an ordinary literate believer read his New Testament, and find *the* acceptable teaching on these subjects? If no one has done this yet, what will be the role of the church in determining *the* biblical doctrine on these important matters? Who will determine the consequences for Christian unity for each and every variation from *the* one doctrine? It may well be a major test of our humility and charity that we recognize these limitations and avoid the magnification of our own opinions into legislation for others.

(3) The religion of most all the New Testament and of the prophetic strain of the Old Testament was genuinely ecumenical. New Testament Christians were of many varieties, embracing different beliefs and practices. I am not at all satisfied with the simple explanation that these believers lived in the transition period between the Law and the Gospel. One reason for this dissatisfaction is that not all their differences are related to the progress from the Law to the Gospel. I have often wondered why the omniscient God, able to forecast Christ from the Old Testament, did not make clearer the *terminus ad quem* for the completion of his revelation in the New Covenant. After all, at the time of the writing of *Jude,* the author stated, "The faith . . . *was* once for all delivered to the saints." Jim, do you add to this statement "once for all," *but not yet for a few years?* Could it be that the Scriptures are not quite clear on this point? Is it possible that the church has learned more of the will of God since the writing of the New Testament ceased? Did the New Testament or the church set the first day of the week as the only day for taking the Lord's Super?

Many of our problems could, it seems to me, be easily solved if we really took seriously the principle that each man "stands or falls before his own master."

(4) The church cannot stay apart from genuine human and societal problems and still be the kind of force Jesus gave His life to establish. For the church to have avoided so long speaking out on race relations, poverty, and all the myriads of injustices that prevail in our society is simply to have abandoned its mission of enlightening the world. People who find the real safety and progress of the church in buildings, respectability and evangelistic services are ignoring the weightier matters of justice and mercy in this world.

Sincerely,

PAT HARDEMAN
3110 5th Street
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BOOK NOTES

Resources of Power is the title of the beautifully bound volume of this journal for 1966. It has a colorful dust jacket, an introduction, and an index. Only 3.00. When you order you may also reserve the matching volume for 1967, to be published early in 1968 with *Things That Matter Most* as the title.

Voices of Concern is still available at 3.50. With the reviews still going on in this journal you will want your copy of this volume that will one day be a hard-to-find collector's item. Our special of *Voices of Concern* and a subscription to *Restoration Review* still stands.

Get your copy of *The Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today,* which is a collection of essays by writers of several wings of the Restoration brotherhood. It is easily worth the 1.50 we charge you for it.

We finally have more copies of *Why Christians Crack Up,* written by an M.D., including a chapter on "Spiritual Causes of Nervous Tension" and some important information on immaturity as the cause of so many problems. Only 3.95 in hardcover.

Gary Freeman's *Are You Going to Church More but Enjoying It Less?* is available in paperback at 2.95 and is entirely worth reading. It is one of the few publications from Church of Christ circles that really says something, while saying it to our time. Freeman is an existentialist! You will appreciate the delicate truths dashed with bits of humor.

William Barclay's *The Promise of the Spirit* continues to be popular with our readers, and we have it available at 2.50. If you want scriptural teaching on the Spirit, get this volume.

Christians Only is a history of the Restoration Movement, interestingly written by James DeForest Murch. Only 2.98.

Some of you wish to study Greek on your own, or at least learn something of the meaning of key Greek terms in the Scriptures. Start with *The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament,* and follow this with *Golden Nuggets from the Greek New Testament,* both by Kenneth Wuest, both for 4.00 counting postage.

The furor over Bishop Pike is worth keeping up with, so we suggest you order for only 85 cents a thin paperback entitled *Bishop Pike: Ham, Heretic or Hero?*

Again we call your attention to *Let My People Go!* by A. V. Mansur. The author, who is a voice from the rank and file of our brotherhood, has put together some thoughtful material. But he doesn't want to make any money from it. Indeed, he has arranged for *Restoration Review* to receive all the money spent for the book through this column. All the more reason for ordering it! He has the price down to only 1.75, but it is worth far more.

Count It All Joy by William Stringfellow, an unusually gifted writer, is drawn from the book of James. His chapters on *Doubt* and *Temptation* will give you something to talk about and think about. In one chapter he explains his misgivings about such crusades as are conducted by Billy Graham, and in doing so gives penetrating insights into the nature of faith.

A paperback entitled *Walter Scott Speaks* by John Neth of Milligan College is a well-documented study of one of our founding fathers. Neth has treated Scott's thought under such classifications as God, Man, Salvation, Holy Spirit, thus giving the reader a fine introduction to Scott. A splendid addition to your Restoration library for only 2.00.

The November issue will have an exciting article by Robert Meyers on "Will the Real King James Version Please Stand Up?" A high school teacher, once a student body president at a Christian college, tells why he decided to leave the Church of Christ, and Cecil Franklin, once a Church of Christ minister but now an Episcopal priest, exchanges views with James D. Bales.

You may order this journal in bundles at ten for 1.00. Regular subscription is 1.00 a year; in clubs of six or more 50 cents per sub.

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